

## Message Text

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TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.)

SUBJECT: SAFIRE STORY IN HARPER'S

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EAGLEBURGER

1. FOLLOWING IS AN AP TICKER ITEM IN THE LATEST OF THE  
SAGA OF THE SAFIRE HARPER'S STORY:

2. BEGIN TEXT FORMER WHITE HOUSE AIDE WILLIAM SAFIRE  
SAID TODAY HENRY KISSINGER WAS ATTEMPTING TO REWRITE  
HISTORY IN HIS COMMENTS ON A SAFIRE ARTICLE CRITICAL OF THE  
SECRETARY OF STATE.

KISSINGER WROTE A LETTER TO HARPER'S MAGAZINE CITING WHAT  
HE TERMED ERRORS IN SAFIRE'S ARTICLE, ENTITLED "PUPPET AS  
PRINCE," THAT APPEARS IN THE MARCH ISSUE.

SAFIRE SAID TODAY THAT "WHAT REALLY CAUSED HIM TO GET SO  
ANGRY WAS THE STORY OF MR. KISSINGER'S ATTEMPT IN  
VLADIVOSTOK IN 1974 TO BUILD UP MR. FORD AT THE EXPENSE  
OF MR. NIXON."

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THE ARTICLE PRESENTED SAFIRE'S THESIS THAT KISSINGER HAD BEEN A PUPPET OF FORMER PRESIDENT RICHARD NIXON BUT WAS IN TURN THE PUPPETEER IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT FORD.

THE ARTICLE SAID IN PART: "... IN VLADIVOSTOK, KISSINGER PASSED THE WORD TO THE PRESS CORPS THAT NIXON NEVER 'LOOKED BREZHNEV IN THE EYE;' THAT THE SOVIET HAD ALWAYS MISTRUSTED NIXON; THAT THE FORMER PRESIDENT'S INFLEXIBILITY HINDERED NEGOTIATION.

"THIS WAS THE MAKING OF AN UNPERSON ON A GRAND SCALE. HENRY ENLISTED FORD'S PRESS SECRETARY, RON NESSEN, IN THE MEDIA-WASHING, CAUSING THAT UNSUSPECTING YOUNG MAN TO SAY, STRAIGHT-FACED, OF THE FORD-BREZHNEV AGREEMENT TO AGREE: 'IT WAS SOMETHING THAT NIXON COULDN'T DO IN THREE YEARS, BUT FORD DID IT IN THREE MONTHS. I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS -- THEY HIT IT OFF.'"

KISSINGER SAID SAFIRE'S STATEMENT ABOUT HIS ENLISTING NESSEN "CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A MALICIOUS CANARD ... MR. NESSEN'S STATEMENT WAS MADE ON AIR FORCE ONE ON THE WAY BACK FROM THE FAR EAST; I WAS IN JAPAN, PREPARING TO GO TO CHINA AND THEREFORE THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM THE EVENT. WHEN I LEARNED OF THE STATEMENT, I IMMEDIATELY ASKED THAT THE WHITE HOUSE ISSUE A RETRACTION, WHICH IT DID."

SAFIRE RESPONDED: "EVERY REPORTER ON THAT TRIP, INCLUDING MANY WHO DON'T LIKE MR. NIXON AT ALL, KNOWS THAT HENRY KISSINGER WAS THE 'DEEP BACKGROUND' SOURCE OF THE LINE THAT MR. FORD WAS SO MUCH BETTER AT DEALING WITH BREZHNEV THAN NIXON WAS.

"HE'S NOW TRYING TO CONCEAL THIS BY BLAMING THE PRESS SECRETARY FOR THE ATTEMPTED SMEAR. THAT WON'T WASH. IF WE'VE LEARNED ANYTHING FROM WATERGATE, IT'S THAT THE REAL TROUBLE COMES WHEN YOU TRY TO COVER UP A MISTAKE."

SAFIRE, A FORMER SPEECHWRITER FOR NIXON AND NOW A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COLUMNIST FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, ALSO TOOK ISSUE WITH KISSINGER OVER THE SECRETARY'S REBUTTAL OF A STATEMENT ABOUT AN APRIL 1972 PRE-SUMMIT MEETING.

SAFIRE SAID IN HIS ARTICLE THAT KISSINGER'S FOURTH AND FINAL DRAFT OF HIS REMARKS FOR A MEETING WITH BREZHNEV CONTAINED REFERENCES TO THE U.S. POLITICAL SCENE THAT "WERE OF QUESTIONABLE PROPRIETY."

KISSINGER SAID THAT WHILE SAFIRE WAS CORRECT ABOUT THE  
CONTENT OF THE DRAFT, IN THE ACTUAL MEETING, "I DID NOT  
FOLLOW THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF MY STAFF. IN FACT, I TOOK

QUITE A DIFFERENT LINE."

SAFIRE COMMENTED: "MR. KISSINGER TOLD ME THAT THE DRAFT  
STATEMENT HE TOOK WITH HIM TO MOSCOW IN 1972 WAS SUB-  
STANTIALLY THE STATEMENT HE READ TO MR. BREZHNEV. END  
TEXT INGERSOLL

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